

Part of a set of four Folklore Stamps including Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan and the Mighty Casey at the Bat.



The Ballad of John Henry

When John Henry was a little baby boy, sitting on his daddy's knee
Well he picked up a hammer and little piece of steel
Said Hammer's gonna be the death of me, lord, lord
Hammer's gonna be the death of mine.

John Henry told his captain

Lord a man ain't nothing but a man
But before I'd let your steam drill beat me down
I'd die with a hammer in my hand

John Henry said to his shaker

Shaker why don't you sing
Because I'm swinging thirty pounds from my
hips on down
Just listen to that cold steel ring

Now the captain said to John Henry

I believe that mountain's caving in

John Henry said right back to the captain

Ain't nothing but my hammer sucking wind

Now the man that invented the steam drill

He thought he was mighty fine

But John Henry drove fifteen feet

The steam drill only made nine

John Henry hammered in the mountains

His hammer was striking fire

But he worked so hard, it broke his poor heart

And he laid down his hammer and he died

John Henry had a little baby

You could hold him in the palm of your hand

And the last words I heard that poor boy say

My daddy was a steel driving man

So every Monday morning

When the blue birds sing

You can hear John Henry for a mile or more

You can hear John Henry's hammer ring